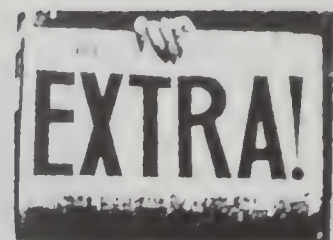


SPECIAL INDEPENDENCE
ISSUE



THE

KNIGHT



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Lithuania votes for independence

PREPARATIONS MADE TO RESUME COINAGE



REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA PLANS RESTORATION OF COINAGE

By Frank Passic

Editor, The Knight

With the many political changes taking place in eastern Europe in recent months, the Republic of Lithuania has been making plans for the restoration of its own monetary system, which was outlawed by the USSR in 1941, nearly a year after Lithuania was invaded by the armies of the Soviet Union.

The Lithuanian Parliament met on Sunday, March 11, 1990, and declared the country independent of the Soviet Union, and elected Vytautas Landsbergis as President of the Republic of Lithuania. The 1938 constitution was restored, and plans to regain control of the vital services are being implemented. At the time of this writing, it is uncertain about the outcome of the political situation concerning Lithuania and the Soviet Union, which are on a collision course. News headlines daily report the latest developments, and the Lithuanian people have made their declaration of independence to the world.

The establishment of a new monetary system is requiring much planning, negotiations, as well as the political realities of reestablishing total sovereignty of the country. In order to be prepared, however, when the time comes to implement the return of the Litas, Lithuanians will have coin designs ready and waiting for the minting process.

We have just received photographs of some of these coin design models, bearing the date "1990" and featuring the Lithuanian national insignia, VYTIS (the Knight). This emblem is the official insignia of the Republic of Lithuania and can be found on nearly all coins minted by the Republic in previous years (1925, 1936, 1938), as well as on the country's medieval coinage.

The coin models illustrated in this issue were designed by artist Henrichas Petras Garska (Henrich Peter Garshka), who is the author of many Lithuanian medals: Darius and Girenas, Vilnius Cathedral, and others. Garska took second place in a coin design competition recently held in Vilnius.

Over the past several months, Lithuanian artists and sculptors have been working on proposed coin design models, as a prelude to choosing a final design and the actual minting of Lithuanian coins. The competition produced two third-place winners, three second-place winners, with a first place winner (the designs to be actually used for the new coins) to be chosen in the final stage of the competition.

The obverse of all the coin models feature the Vytis emblem, the name of the country, "LIETUVA," and the date 1990. This is similar to the coins minted by Lithuania dated 1936. The denominations illustrated in this issue are for the minor coins, in denominations of 1, 2, 15, and 20 centas.

It should be noted that while the Soviet Union uses the ruble and kopeck standard, Lithuania's monetary system was called the LITAS (first three letters spell LIT for LITHuania), and operated on 100 centas=1 Litas. The value of the new monetary system has not yet been decided, and so the 15 centu model is reflective of its Soviet kopeck counterpart.

Coins minted in independent Lithuania were issued in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 Centas, as well as 1, 2, 5, and 10 Litas. Models for a gold 50 Litu coin were prepared in 1926, but the coin was never minted.

On the proposed Garska designs, the 1 centas features the revised Columns of Gediminas emblem, a secondary Lithuanian emblem of sovereignty often associated with Grand Duke Gediminas and the capital city of Vilnius. The bottom center line is removed on this updated emblem, as opposed to that which appeared on Lithuania's earlier coins. This is reflective of updates made to the emblem prior to World War II. The Gediminas and Vilnius restoration of capital city stamps issued in 1940 will show the new Columns of Gediminas emblem without the bottom center base line.

The Lithuanian monetary unit, the Litas, was established in 1922 after several years of using German Ost-marks, which the Lithuanians dubbed "Auksinas." One Litas held a value of U.S. 10¢, until the 1930's when it was raised to approximately 16¢. The first 20th century Lithuanian coins were minted in England bearing the date 1925.

A Lithuanian mint was opened in June, 1936 in Kaunas, the temporary capital at the time, under the direction of Jonas K. Karys. Coins were minted at the government printing facility, Spindulys, in specially prepared quarters. Master dies and coin planchets were supplied by the Brussels Mint in Belgium. The designer of Lithuania's coinage was Juozas Zikaras, a noted Lithuanian artist and sculptor, who fashioned Lithuania's statue of freedom. Coins were minted in Kaunas bearing the dates 1936 and 1938. The mint closed in 1939 at the start of World War II.

When the Soviet Union invaded the Republic of Lithuania on June 15, 1940, the Litas was allowed to remain in circulation (with the exception of the

Continued on page 4...



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1938 silver 10 litu which featured the bust of Lithuanian President Antanas Smetona) until it was finally outlawed in March, 1941. There was an attempt to reintroduce the Litas during the German occupation 1941-1944, but this was not realized.

What the independence proclamation and the preparation of coin models means for us is "new life" for our hobby specialty! Already in Lithuania there has been formed an association of Lithuanian collectors (including numismatic) which we are hoping to make contact with, and other similar groups in their respective fields.

We urge our LNA members with direct contacts in Lithuania to encourage them to keep this editor informed as to the very latest numismatic developments, etc. so we can present them to you, our readers. We are dreaming of the day when we can send our LNA members a newly minted 1 Centas coin from the Republic of Lithuania, as quickly as possible from the time they are released into circulation. Wouldn't you like that?

If you have Lithuanian collector friends, sign them up for the LNA, as we intend to keep you informed as to the very latest in the field of Lithuanian numismatics, including the newest medals that are being released.



Left:

A proposed 1 Centas design

The aforementioned money design competition was held February 9, 1990 in Vilnius. Besides sculptor Garska, other winners included art student Alvydas Mandeika, and Liudvikas Pocius.

The news of the Lithuanian coin designs was mentioned on the front page of *Coin World* April 4, 1990 issue, pp. 1, and 118.

In addition to coin models, proposed Lithuanian banknote designs were also exhibited. Illustrated in this article (on page 8) are three designs. The first is for a hypothetical 3-Litai note, featuring the bust of Lithuanian patriot Dr. Vincas Kudirka, who wrote the Lithuanian national anthem. All notes in the competition bore the date 1990.

The 100 Litu design features a Lithuanian woman on the obverse, with the Lithuanian insignia Vytis in the center top. The 100 Litu note issued by Lithuania in the late 1920's and 1930's featured a Lithuanian woman.

The 50 Litu note features Lithuanian patriarch Vytautas the Great, amidst a design of Lithuanian motifs.

The banknote designs were illustrated in the February 21-28 No. 8 (#69) issue of the Vilnius-produced publication, *Atgimimas* (Revival).

(Turn to page 8 for photos of the bank-note designs.)

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L.N.A. NEWS

NOTE: This will be the last issue of *The Knight* until the fall (September), when we will begin Volume 13. All regular features will resume them.

Renewal notices will be mailed shortly. Thank you for your continued support of the Lithuanian Numismatic Association!



Coins of the Republic of Lithuania

For our newer members, as well as a review for us, we are presenting here a listing of 20th century Lithuanian coins, patterns, and test strikes. We have assigned them numbers (example: LNA-1), and letters for the patterns.

Coins Minted at the King's Norton Metal Company
Birmingham, England. Dated 1925.

Metal Content: Copper-aluminum. 90% copper, 10% Aluminum. (Some minor metal content variances exist).

Proof-like uniface text strikes are known in all minor denominations (a=Obverse [Vytis side] showing; b=Reverse (denomination) side showing. In addition, a proof-like Mint Set was also produced, and coins from this set are assigned the letter "c" after the regular number.

LNA-1
1 Centas
Weight: 1.6 gr. Diameter: 16 mm.
Mintage: 5 million.

LNA-2
5 Centai
Weight: 2.1 gr. Diameter: 19 mm.
Mintage: 12 million.

LNA-3
10 Centu
Weight: 3 gr. Diameter: 21 mm.
Mintage: 12 million.

d. Bronze striking using 1925 die, probably in 1936. 1 known.

LNA-4
20 Centu
Weight: 4 gr. Diameter: 23 mm.
Mintage: 8 million

LNA-5
50 Centu
Weight: 4 gr. Diameter: 25 mm.
Mintage: 5 million



Coins Minted at the Royal Mint, London, England

Metal content: .500 silver, .500 copper

LNA-6
1 Litas
Weight: 2.7 gr. Diameter: 19 mm.
Mintage: 4,000,096 in 1925; 1,984,714 in 1936 in Kaunas. Total: 5,984,810.
.0434 troy ounce actual silver weight.
a. Proof-record strike (London)

LNA-7
2 Litu
Weight: 5.4 gr. Diameter: 23 mm.
Mintage: 3,000,145
.0868 troy ounce actual silver weight.
a. Proof-record strike.



LNA-8
5 Litai
Weight: 13.5 gr. Diameter: 30 mm.
Mintage: 1,000,121
.2170 troy ounce actual silver weight
a. Proof-record strike.



Coins Minted in Kaunas, Lithuania, dated 1936

The minor denomination coins were bronze, while the silver ones were 75% silver, 25% copper.

LNA-9
1 Centas
Weight: 1 gr. Diameter: 16.5 mm.
Mintage: 9,955,090

LNA-10
2 Centai
Weight: 2.3 gr. Diameter: 18.5 mm.
Mintage: 4,951,107

LNA-11
5 Centai
Weight: 3 gr. Diameter: 20.5 mm.
Mintage: 4,800,000

LNA-12
5 Litai. Obverse: Jonas Basanavicius
Weight: 9 gr. Diameter: 27 mm.
Edge: Lettered: TAUTOS GEROVE TAVO GEROVE in random positions.
Mintage: 2,612,000
.2170 troy ounce actual silver weight.
a. Pattern as circulation coin, plain edge, rotated reverse.
b. Test strike, lettered edge, rotated reverse.
c. Pattern, plain edge, "J. ZIKARAS" spelled out below bust.
Reverse is not rotated.

LNA-13
10 Litu. Obverse: Vytautas the Great.
Weight: 18 gr. Diameter: 32 mm.
Mintage: 720,000
Edge: Lettered: VIENYBEJE TAUTOS JEGA in random positions.
.4340 troy ounce actual silver weight.
a. Pattern, plain edge, rotated reverse.
b. Off-metal striking in GOLD (2 minted; one given to president Smetona, the other to artist J. Zikaras).

Dated 1938

LNA-14
10 Litu Commemorative. Obv: President Smetona.
Weight: 18 gr. Diameter: 32 mm.
Mintage: 170,000
Edge: Lettered VIENYBEJE TAUTOS JEGA
.4340 troy ounce actual silver weight



Continued next page....

- a. Test strike, rotated reverse
- b. Off-metal striking in GOLD. (2 Minted; one given to president Smetona, the other to artist J. Zikaras), and edge lettered: VIENAS AUKSINIS DESIMTLITIS.

.1 Defaced circulation coin (during 1940) turned in before melting.



LNA-15

2 Litai (Pattern). Obv: President Smetona. Rev: Vytis
Diameter: 23 mm.

- a. Brass, edge lettered: LIETUVA LIETUVA LIETUVA.
- b. Silver, reeded edge.
- c. Silver, lettered edge (as "a.")
- d. Silver, plain edge.

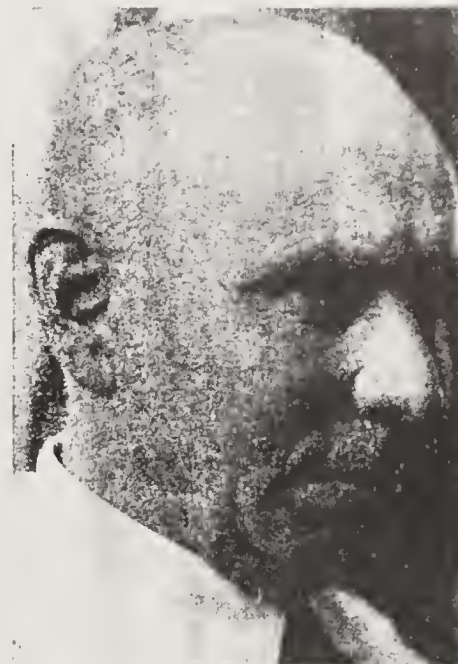
LNA-16

2 Litai (Pattern). Obv: President Smetona. Rev: Columns of Gediminas emblem.

Weight: 5.45 gr. Diameter: 23 mm.

Metal Content: .800 silver, .200 copper

- a. Silver, plain edge
- b. Silver, lettered edge. (as #15a)



JUOZAS ZIKARAS, Designer of Lithuanian coins

The mint of the Republic of Lithuania was located in the complex of the government printing facility, Spindulys at 11 Misko St. in Kaunas. The mint was located on the first two floors of the far right wing, and operated from June, 1936, until September, 1939.

Isteigta 1928 met.

Pagrindinis kapitalas

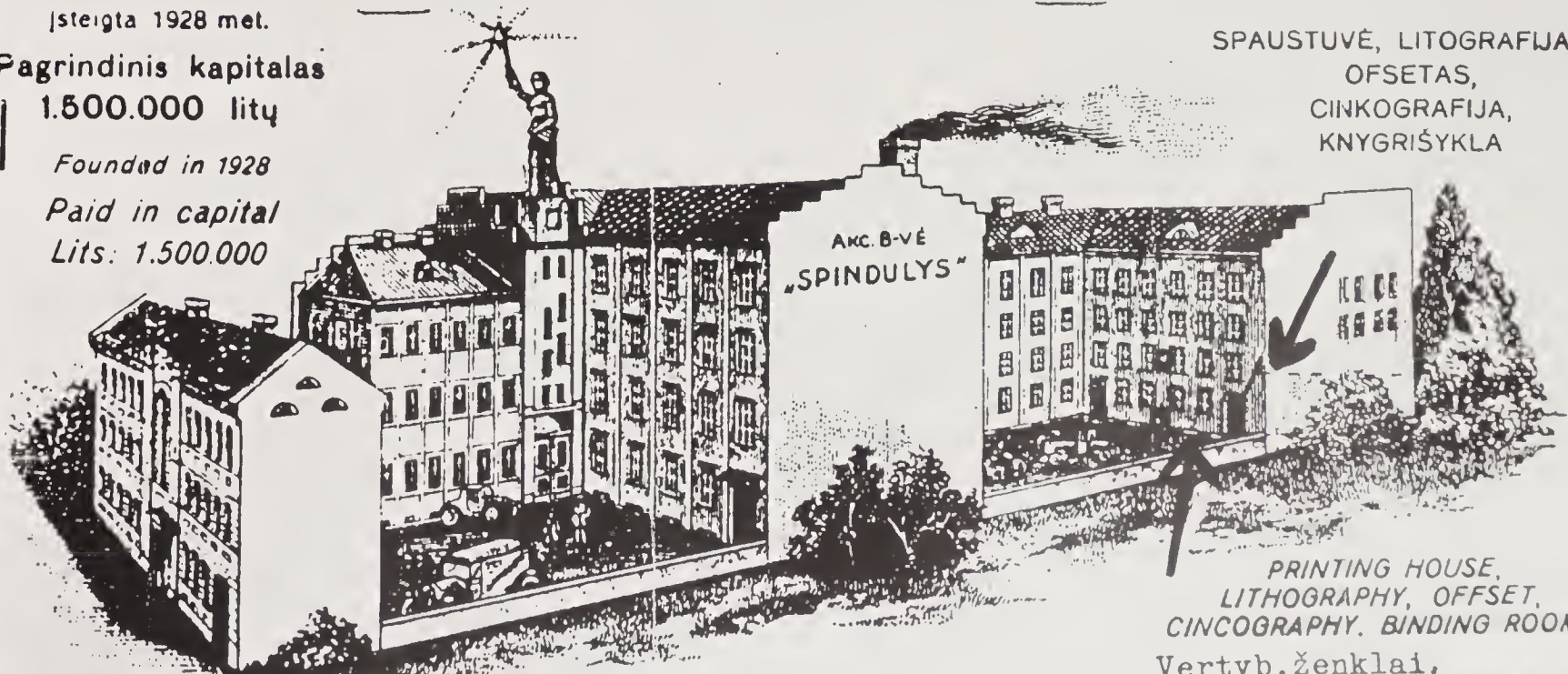
1.500.000 litų

Founded in 1928

Paid in capital

Lits: 1.500.000

SPAUSTUVĖ, LITOGRAFIJA,
OFSETAS,
CINKOGRAFIJA,
KNYGRISYKLA



Kaunas, Miško g. 11.

Akc. „Spindulio“ Bendrovės (monės rūmai
Edifice of the „Spindulys“, Joint Stock Company

PRINTING HOUSE,
LITHOGRAPHY, OFFSET,
CINCOGRAPHY. BINDING ROOM.

Vertyb. ženklai,
MONETŲ KALYKLA
The Mint

PROPOSED LITHUANIAN BANKNOTE DESIGNS

On the left are illustrated some proposed Lithuanian bank-note designs, just several of those exhibited in Vilnius on February 9.

